



Montana

Office of Public Instruction

Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

EXHIBIT 3

DATE 1/18/2013

HB 166

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Madam Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Terry Kendrick; I am here on behalf of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in support of HB 166. The Office of Public Instruction supports providing scholarships for Montana students who attend our postsecondary institutions whether they are studying to attain a four-year degree, two-year degree, or occupational certificate.

We understand that the funding from this bill would also be available for high school students who take dual enrollment classes. Dual enrollment allows students to earn college credit while they are still in high school. Montana students can take college-level courses in three ways: through a class at their school taught by a high school teacher certified to teach a college-level course, attend classes on a community, state or tribal college campus, or take on-line courses offered by the Montana University System.

National studies show that dual enrollment students are more likely to graduate from high school, more likely to stay in college a second semester and to finish their degree.¹ They are better prepared for success in college and the workplace.

Our economy is changing. Five years from now, more than 60 percent of the jobs in Montana will require some level of postsecondary education.² Providing students with the opportunity to take college-level courses while in high school helps ease their transition into college, decreases the need for college remediation classes, and helps students and their families save money on the cost of postsecondary education.

The Montana University System currently waives 50 percent of the cost of tuition, but the majority of high school students taking college classes still pay \$50 per credit which is \$150 for a three-credit class. While this is a great savings, some families cannot afford the \$150.00. Flathead Valley Community College has the highest number of dual enrollment students because they offer the first six credits to those students free of charge.

HB 166 provides a great opportunity to expand the number of Montana students participating in dual enrollment. Students, regardless of their ability to pay, could graduate from high school being well on their way to a degree or professional certificate, thus improving their chances of economic success in the future.

More than 50 high schools in Montana have dual enrollment partnerships with a community college, university, or tribal college. High schools in communities such as Polson, Superior, Sidney, and Hamilton are interested in starting a program. I recently spoke with representatives from 35 of the high schools and several of the community colleges. There was overwhelming support for covering the cost of tuition for dual enrollment students. I ask you to support HB 166 and I will be available if you have questions.

¹ Broadening the Benefits of Dual Enrollment, Katherine L. Hughes, Olga Rodriguez, Linsey Edwards & Clive Belfield Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University (July 2012)

² The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce

The Montana Office of Public Instruction provides vision, advocacy, support, and leadership for schools and communities to ensure that all students meet today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.